

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A folding machine provided downstream of a printing unit of a rotary printing machine, comprising:

a cut-off unit comprising:

a cut-off mechanism for cutting off a sheet at a predetermined cut-off length position from a web fed from said printing unit, and

a first belt conveyor comprising a pair of conveyor belts for nipping and conveying ~~said sheet cut off by said cut-off mechanism~~ the cut sheet at a first speed;

a processor, ~~provided~~ disposed downstream of said cut-off unit, ~~for processing said sheet cut off by said cut-off unit~~ and configured to process the cut sheet conveyed at a second speed different than said first speed; and

a second belt conveyor ~~provided~~ disposed between said cut-off unit and said processor, ~~the second belt conveyor~~ and comprising at least one pair of conveyor belts for receiving configured to receive said sheet the cut sheet conveyed by said first belt conveyor, and ~~conveying~~ convey said sheet to said processor;

wherein said second belt conveyor is a variable speed conveyor configured to vary ~~varies~~ a sheet conveying speed during the conveyance of said sheet so that in receiving said sheet from said first belt conveyor, said sheet conveying speed becomes approximately equal to ~~a first speed~~ said first speed at which said sheet is conveyed in said first belt conveyor, and in conveying said sheet to said processor, said sheet conveying speed becomes approximately equal to ~~a second speed~~ said second speed at which said sheet is conveyed in said processor.

2. **(Currently Amended)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cut-off unit includes: ~~is constructed such that it can~~

a variable ~~vary and cut a cut-off~~ length of the web fed from said printing unit;

a variable speed at which said web is conveyed, the speed settable ~~is set~~ according to a cut-off length of said sheet that is cut off by said cut-off unit; and

said first speed<sub>1</sub> at which said sheet is conveyed in said first belt conveyor<sub>1</sub> is set so that it becomes equal to the web conveying speed.

3. **(Original)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cut-off unit comprises a first cut-off mechanism for partially cutting said web; and a second cut-off mechanism, provided downstream of said first cut-off mechanism, for cutting off said sheet from said web by cutting uncut portions of said web that is not cut by said first cut-off mechanism.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 3, wherein said first belt conveyor nips said web that is cut by said second cut-off mechanism, and which further comprises ~~a fourth~~ another belt conveyor comprising a pair of conveyor belts for nipping and conveying said web to said first cut-off mechanism.

5. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 3, further comprising a first relative-phase changer, interposed between said first cut-off mechanism and said second cut-off mechanism, for changing relative phases of rotation of said first cut-off mechanism and said second cut-off mechanism when varying a cut-off length of said web fed from said printing unit.

6. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 3, further comprising: a scored-line forming mechanism, provided upstream of said first and second cut-off mechanisms, for forming a horizontally scored line in said web at a predetermined

position; and a second relative-phase changer, interposed between said scored-line forming mechanism and said first cut-off mechanism, for changing relative phases of rotation of said scored-line forming mechanism and said first cut-off mechanism when varying a cut-off length of said web fed from said printing unit.

7. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 5, further comprising: a scored-line forming mechanism, provided upstream of said first and second cut-off mechanisms, for forming a horizontally scored line in said web at a predetermined position; and a second relative-phase changer, interposed between said scored-line forming mechanism and said first cut-off mechanism, for changing relative phases of rotation of said scored-line forming mechanism and said first cut-off mechanism when varying a cut-off length of said web fed from said printing unit.

8. **(Original)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein said sheet conveying speed of said processor is faster than that of said first belt conveyor.

9. **(Currently Amended)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 8, wherein ~~said~~ the variable speed second belt conveyor is configured to receive ~~receives said the cut~~ sheet at a speed approximately equal to the sheet conveying speed of said first belt conveyor, ~~then accelerates the sheet conveying speed~~ accelerate to a speed approximately equal to the sheet conveying speed of said processor, ~~then delivers said~~ deliver the cut sheet to said processor at a speed approximately equal to the sheet conveying speed of said processor, ~~and decelerates the sheet conveying speed~~ decelerate to the sheet conveying speed of said first belt conveyor, and then receive ~~receives a next cut~~ sheet ~~next cut off~~ from said web.

10. **(Original)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein said processor comprises a discharger for discharging a sheet cut off by said cut-off unit or a folder for

folding a sheet cut off by said cut-off unit along a crease perpendicular to a sheet conveying direction.

11. **(Canceled)**

12. **(Original)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein said first belt conveyor, said second belt conveyor, said cut-off unit, and said processor are respectively driven by different motors, and a phase of each of said motors can be relatively varied.

13. **(Original)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising an abutting portion, provided between said second belt conveyor and said processor, which a front end of said sheet abuts and by which a conveying phase of said sheet in said folder can be adjusted.

14. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a third belt conveyor, provided downstream of said second belt conveyor and at an entrance portion to said processor, which comprises a pair of conveyor belts for receiving said sheet from said second belt conveyor and conveying said sheet to said processor at the sheet conveying speed of said processor.

15. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a non-circular roller, provided at a position where said sheet is delivered from one of said two belt conveyors adjacent to each other to the other of said two belt conveyors, which guides one of a pair of conveyor belts and has a plurality of surface portions in which distances from a center of rotation to the surface portions are different.

16. **(Withdrawn)** The folding machine as set forth in claim 1, wherein the conveyor belts of said second belt conveyor are driven by non-circular rollers having a plurality of surface portions in which distances from a center of rotation to the surface portions are different.

17. **(Withdrawn)** A folding machine provided downstream of a printing unit of a rotary printing machine, comprising: a cut-off unit capable of varying a cut-off length of a web fed from said printing unit and cutting off a sheet from said web; and a folder, provided downstream of said cut-off unit, for folding said sheet cut off from said web by said cut-off unit along a crease perpendicular to a sheet conveying direction; wherein said cut-off unit has a first cut-off mechanism for partially cutting said web at a predetermined cut-off length position, a belt conveyor for nipping and conveying said web partially cut by said first cut-off mechanism, and a second cut-off mechanism for cutting off a sheet with a predetermined cut-off length by cutting uncut portions of said web conveyed by said belt conveyor; and wherein said folder is provided downstream of said belt conveyor and comprises a pair of folding rollers and a chopper folder for chopper-folding said sheet in cooperation with said folding rollers by moving into a space between said folding rollers.

18. **(Withdrawn)** A variable cut-off length type rotary printing machine comprising the folding machine as set forth in claim and constructed such that it can vary and cut a cut-off length of a printed web.

19. **(Withdrawn)** A variable cut-off length type rotary printing machine comprising the folding machine as set forth in claim 17 and constructed such that it can vary and cut a cut-off length of a printed web.